

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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P R 271644Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4019
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 131

E.9. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS PEPR NS GY
SUBJ: POSSIBILITY OF SURINAM-GUYANA TALKS

1. IN THE MIDST OF PRESS REPORTS OF A JANUARY 26 MEETING BETWEEN GUYANA'S FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GUYANESE CORANTIJN RIVER FISHERMEN, DURING WHICH WILLS IS QUOTED AS SAYING "GUYANA WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO INTERFERE WITH THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE FISHERMEN," GUYANESE EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED TO US REPORTS THAT WILLS HAS ASKED TO COME TO PARAMARIBO WEEK OF JANUARY 30 TO DISCUSS CORANTIJN RIVER FISHING QUESTION. GUYANESE OFFICIAL HERE INDICATED HE IS STILL AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE SURINAM GOVERNMENT (GOS), BUT HE EXPECTED AGREEMENT TO HOLDING TALKS.

2. COMMENT: A MEETING NEXT WEEK BETWEEN WILLS AND PRIME MINISTER ARRON WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACT THE TWO LEADERS HAVE HAD SINCE SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE, BUT IT WOULD BE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR REALLY SUBSTANTIVE TALKS BETWEEN THEM. IF THE GOS AGREES
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TO A VISIT BY WILLS NEXT WEEK (WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE SANWICHED BETWEEN THIS WEEKEND'S VISIT BY THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE FEBRUARY 9 ARRIVAL OF QUEEN JULIANA ON A STATE VISIT), IT IS LIKELY THAT OTHER ISSUES BESIDES INTERESTS OF GUYANESE FISHERMEN IN THE CORANTIJN WILL BE DISCUSSED. GUYANESE HANDLING OF SHRIMPING TRAWLERS OPERATING OUT OF PARAMARIBO (INCLUDING

LAST SEPTEMBER'S SEIZURE OF SEVEN SUCH VESSELS) WILL BE ON THE MINDS OF THE SURINAMERS AND OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES MAY COME UP. IT IS NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR AT WHOSE INITIATIVE THESE TALKS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED, BUT IT IS A HOPEFUL SIGN THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY FIND A WAY TO DISCUSS THEIR DIFFERENCES AND MUTUAL PROBLEMS. NEVERTHELESS, EMOTIONS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENT ARE AT THE HEART OF MOST OF THEIR DISAGREEMENTS AND SOLUTIONS ARE NOT LIKELY TO COME EASILY.
ZURHELLEN

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